

NASR: PROMISE AND PERFORMANCE

(SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF SPEECHES OF NASR AND HIS LIEUTENANTS)

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I. DOMESTIC POLICY

EGYPTIAN ECONOMY UNDER NASR

1. Aswan

The construction of the High Dam appears to many Egyptians as the only feasible way to meet the country's urgent need of more farm land for its rapidly growing population and of more electric power for its expanding industry. To the present rulers of Egypt, the project seems the best possible scheme for showing the people that the military regime is bringing tangible economic benefits to the country.

This project, so vital to Egypt's future well-being, seemed recently to be on the verge of realization. The world Bank had expressed a willingness to consider a large loan, and the governments of the United States and Great Britain had similarly expressed a willingness to extend financial assistance. Unfortunately for the Egyptian people, these sources of aid have now been made impossible by the rash and ill-advised actions of 'Abd al-Nasr.

First, the Cairo regime arranged to purchase from the Soviet Union an amount of arms vastly in excess of what the strained Egyptian economy could afford, and to pay for these arms the military clique mortgaged the Egyptian cotton crop for years to come. Inasmuch as Egypt's cotton provides much of the country's foreign exchange, the International Bank could only conclude that the arrangements with the Soviet Union cast serious doubts as to Egypt's ability to repay the desired loan and to raise the other funds that would be needed for the internal expenses of the High Dam project.

Secondly, Nasr aggorantly refused to consider any supervision by the Bank over the spending of the loan funds and insisted that the Bank simply hand the loan funds over to him. The fact that Nasr and his cohorts have not shown themselves to possess a degree of competence in economic and financial matters such as would inspire confidence and the fact that such a procedure would be contrary to the Bank's normal practices were blithely ignored by the Cairo regime which emotionally declared that any kind of supervision would be a form of imperialism. It is indeed strange that all other recipients of World Bank loans consider such supervision merely as sound, normal financial practice and that only in the case of Egypt does it somehow become sinister and imperialistic.

The result was that the United States and Great Britain withdrew their offers of aid, while the World Bank loan failed to materialize. Considering this development as an unbearable blow to his pride and prestige and realizing that his regime would meet growing opposition among the Egyptian people unless he could divert their attention to

some other problem, Nasr reacted by announcing on 26 July 1956 the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company.

2. Canal Seizure

In his book, The Philosophy of the Revolution, Nasr cynically remarks: "How easy it is to appeal to the emotions of the people!" The Suez Canal issue is a good example of how Nasr puts this philosophy into practice. In wildly emotional terms he justified his action to the Egyptian people by charging that the Canal Company was an instrument of imperialistic exploitation sucking out the life's blood of the Egyptian people. Truly this was a most sudden discovery, for only a month earlier, in a speech in Cairo on 19 June, he had declared:

Today Egypt is entirely free. Not a single foreign flag flies over Egyptian soil. For the first time in centuries we are completely free to fight for our own destiny. Today marks the beginning of a new era in which we shall be ruled by a constitution of the people . . . A phase of the struggle has come to an end . . . Today for the first time in a long period we feel sovereign in our own country. 1/

Yet by 26 July Nasr had discovered that Egypt was still groaning under the yoke of imperialistic exploitation.

On 26 May 1956, the Canal Company was still sufficiently honorable so that the Nasr regime deemed it proper to negotiate an agreement whereby the Company would invest \$60 million of its reserves in Egyptian development projects. 2/ Yet by 26 July the Company had somehow become an instrument of imperialistic exploitation. On 20 June, Burhan Said, representative of the Egyptian government to the Company, made a public statement in which he referred to the developing of plans for the future reversion of the Canal to Egypt in 1968. 3/ Yet by 26 July the nature of the Company had somehow changed so radically that it became necessary to seize it immediately.

In announcing the Canal nationalization Nasr told the Egyptian people that the Company had an annual profit of \$100 million which Egypt would now take for herself, thus permitting realization of the High Dam project without recourse to foreign financial assistance. 4/ This was a flagrant deception of the Egyptian people, as Nasr was well aware.

Let us consider the facts. In 1954, for example, the total revenue--not profits but revenue--of the Company were roughly \$93 million of which \$30 million represented profits. In 1955, total

revenue was \$98 million of which again \$30 million represented profits. ^{5/} Since Egypt was already receiving one-sixth of the profits, the maximum annual additional amount that Egypt could hope to obtain by nationalization of the Canal is \$25 million.

But this is only part of the story. First of all, the Canal properties themselves constitute only a small part of the company's total holdings and Canal fees and charges only a small part of its revenue. As Nasr well knew the Company's properties located outside of Egypt and the revenues derived therefrom were beyond his reach and control and would continue so whatever he might do to the Company's assets in Egypt. Secondly, as Nasr must have suspected would happen, (as indeed it has,) many shippers have continued to pay Canal charges and fees into the Company's accounts in London and Paris where they cannot be touched by Nasr. Thus prospective profits for Egypt are further reduced. Thirdly, at the time of nationalization, the Company was preparing plans for extensive and expensive improvements to the Canal to meet growing urgent needs. ^{6/} Egypt, if it wishes to keep the Canal in operating condition, will be forced to carry out these plans; and the money used for this purpose obviously cannot be used for the High Dam. Finally, Nasr has promised that Egypt would compensate the Company for its nationalized property, thus adding still a further drain on the prospective reduced revenue from the Canal. ^{7/}

3. The Canal Seizure and Aswan

The above facts and figures make it abundantly clear that Nasr was deliberately misleading the Egyptian people when he spoke of profits of \$100 million a year that would be available for the High Dam project. Not only were Company profits less than a third of the figure he cited, but he also knew that even this lesser figure was greatly in excess of what Egypt could possibly hope to obtain after nationalization. Moreover, the necessity of expending funds for improving the Canal and for paying compensation for the seized property reduce still further prospective net profits. In effect, nationalization of the Canal will not provide Egypt with \$100 million a year for the High Dam project but, at most, only a few millions. This fact was tacitly admitted during a press conference held only a week after nationalization by Ali Sabri, a spokesman for Nasr, who, when asked pointedly if Canal revenue would be enough to meet the cost of widening and deepening the Canal as well as finance the High Dam, could not answer in the affirmative and had to give the evasive reply that there were "undoubtedly other ways for the state to implement its projects." ^{8/}

4. Social Development Programs: Promise and Performance*

The controlled Egyptian press and radio have not admitted the truth on the Aswan project to the hopeful Egyptian people. As long

* For a more detailed criticism of the Nasr regime's development programs see Lehrman Hals' "Potemkin Village on the Nile", The Reporter, May 3, 1955 (News Highlights October 11, 1956)

as the Nasr regime can hold out hope of the High Dam project, the people will be less inclined to think about the harsh realities of other economic problems or about the regime's failure to bring to Egypt the better life which Nasr and his cohorts have so loudly and so frequently promised.

Let us consider the regime's record. One of the most highly propagandized actions of the Nasr regime has been the land reform movement, allegedly designed to free the Egyptian peasant from dependence on a landlord and to give him an adequate plot of ground that he can call his own. No one can quarrel with this objective, but what are the facts?

Initially the Nasr regime announced that it would distribute three to four million feddan** of land among peasants and landless agricultural workers. Subsequently the figure was reduced to one million, then to three-quarters, and by July 1953, Deputy Premier Gamal Salim was speaking of 500,000 feddan. The fact is that by the end of 1955 the government had distributed only 105,000 feddan, consisting almost entirely of former royal estates, while private landowners had sold an additional 95,000 feddan. 9/ Much of this was bought by well-to-do peasants in the 5-to-50 feddan class, while many landlords arranged spurious sales to tenants whom they still controlled. At the most, only 20,000 peasants out of Egypt's millions have benefited from this land distribution scheme.

Yet Nasr, has all but claimed that every Egyptian peasant is now happy and prosperous. In an article published in January 1955 in Foreign Affairs, Nasr wrote that "The Egyptian peasant is no longer the virtual serf of big landlords but his own master. The agrarian reform program has resulted in a substantial increase in his real income." 11/

On 17 January 1956, Nasr stated in a speech:

Farmers, you have achieved your objectives. The regaining of the right to life and freedom was not an easy matter. . . Today, O farmers, you should look at the future and feel the right demands of your deeds and struggle so that you can preserve. . . We all look at the future with a feeling of equal opportunities, social collaboration and with hope. 12/

Speaking on 18 June 1956, Nasr added the statement:

This generation was privileged to feel a great change. The dignity of the fatherland was restored to it deservedly and by right. Its sons are no longer the harvest of poverty and disease. 13/

** Approximately two acres.

And during a speech in Cairo on 19 June 1956, Nasr declared:

Today . . . the peasant has been freed of slavery and for the first time in the history of this homeland he is free and not threatened in his livelihood, living, dignity, security for his family. 14/

O ye Egyptian peasants! Will ye testify that none among you fears for tomorrow's bread, that none among you feels oppressed by fate as did your fathers?

The Nasr regime has carried out the more dramatic features of its development program, the projects with a high propaganda appeal, the projects which everyone can see and thus perhaps overlook the lack of accomplishments elsewhere. Liberation Square in Cairo has been beautified and completed. The corniche along the Nile was constructed in a few weeks, complete with trees and flowers. Cairo airport has been enlarged. 15/ Other conspicuous projects also have been undertaken, but the lot of the ordinary peasant and worker remains as miserable as it was under the Faruk regime.

5. Economic Policies of the Regime

The Nasr regime also has given much fanfare to elaborate plans for large-scale industrialization of Egypt and has fostered the construction of numerous installations to that end. This is a worthy ambition with which no one can quarrel. However, the details of these plans and the manner in which they are being executed show how little qualified are the present rulers of Egypt in the realm of economics. For example, the Helwan steel plant, the most widely publicized of the industrial projects, will be producing 220,000 tons of steel annually after it goes into full operation in the middle of 1957, and the Egyptian leaders have been boasting of the large amount of foreign exchange which Egypt will save as a result. But they have not told the Egyptian people that the steel to be produced at Helwan will cost Egypt three times as much as imported steel or that this high production cost is, to a large extent, the result of their decision to locate the plant at Helwan far from the sources of the raw materials which the plant will consume. Thus funds which could be used for more urgent projects, projects which would serve directly to improve conditions of life for the peasant and worker, are spent on an uneconomic project designed primarily to boost the prestige of Egypt and of its ruling clique.

The current inflation in Egypt, which causes such hardships for the poor classes, has already been mentioned. The Nasr regime, instead of solving this problem, is, on the contrary, undertaking

measures which will further intensify it. To raise funds for its various schemes the government has announced two loans, one for \$100 million Egyptian pounds to be raised abroad, and the second for \$200 million pounds to be raised internally by having the National Bank of Egypt print and issue currency. When the experienced financiers of Egypt protested that this would increase the amount of money in circulation by one-third, thus inducing a dangerous rise in prices, the government issued a decree which removed the protesting financiers from the Bank's board of directors, they were replaced by a minions amenable to the government's dangerous policy of inflation. Not unnaturally, the immediate result of these actions was a flight of capital, a rise in prices, and a hoarding of consumer goods. 16/

Egypt's economic difficulties have been further intensified by the recent nationalization. It has already been pointed out how Nasr deliberately misled the people when he said the seizure would enable Egypt to build without foreign aid the High Dam, which is so important to Egypt's future prosperity. The truth is that not only is Egypt not going to get from the Canal the funds necessary for the construction of the Dam but the economic consequences of the nationalization are soon going to bring Egypt to the brink of bankruptcy.

Let us examine some of these economic consequences. First of all, foreigners who have previously invested capital in Egypt are seeking to withdraw it, while prospective investors have hastily cancelled their plans. Egyptian merchants, moreover, are finding it increasingly difficult to import goods, for their sterling accounts have been blocked by British government, while Egyptian cotton, which formerly supplied the country with most of its foreign exchange, has been pledged to Soviet Russia for many years to come as payment for the recent arms purchase. Is not every citizen of Cairo and Alexandria, for example, able to see for himself that already some of the most basic and necessary commodities have disappeared from store shelves? The Canal nationalization also has resulted in a drying up of a second source of foreign exchange the tourist trade. For what tourist is willing to go to Egypt when the international crisis caused by the nationalization could conceivably result in armed conflict?

Nasr must have realized that all this would come to pass. Yet he was so absorbed in the problem of maintaining and even increasing his own personal prestige and so little concerned with the economic welfare of Egypt and its people that he chose to ignore the inevitable consequences of his act.

The Nasr regime has failed to keep its promises, has failed to improve the lot of the Egyptian people but has, on the contrary, plunged the Egyptian economy into a perilous state. In his book, The Philosophy of the Revolution, Nasr, in discussing the plans of himself and his cohorts, wrote that "I would be surprised if we were able to solve all the problems of our country." 17/ How right he was!

NASR AND DEMOCRACY

On 23 July 1952, a revolution occurred in Egypt. Its announced aim was to replace the corrupt and discredited Faruk-Wafdist regime with one which would truly represent the Egyptian people. This was indeed a noble and worthy concept, and the people of Egypt as well as of the entire world hailed the new regime and looked forward to Egypt's taking its place without delay in the ranks of the world's democratic nations.

How bitter has been the disillusionment! Today there reigns in Egypt not a democratic government but a dictatorship, a military oligarchy. That fact cannot be denied even though the members of the ruling military clique have recently exchanged their uniforms for civilian garb. In Egypt today are to be found all the elements of a police state: secret police, concentration camps, press censorship, a single party, the use of plebiscites, the constant eulogizing of a single individual as the indispensable, all-seeing, all-knowing man.

'Abd al-Nasr has written in his book, The Philosophy of the Revolution, that the aim of the army movement headed by himself and his associates was to secure for Egypt and its people self-government and sovereign independence. 1/ In an article written for the January 1955 issue of Foreign Affairs, he states that "our ultimate aim is to provide Egypt with a truly democratic and representative government." 2/ Similar views also were expressed by General Naguib, the leader of the Revolution, whom Nasr and his cohorts have since abused and slandered in an effort to destroy his reputation in the eyes of the people. In a radio address on 10 December 1952, Naguib announced that a republic was to be established, based on a constitution "to be so drafted as to realize the people's desire for clean and sound parliamentary government." 3/ And on 6 March 1954, he declared that "I believe that the people's participation in directing the affairs of their country is the only safeguard against every kind of oppression." 4/

For a time it seemed that the Revolutionary Council would honor its promises and that Egypt would achieve a true democratic government. On 5 March 1954, Ali Maher, following an interview with Naguib and 'Abd al-Nasr, stated that the Egyptian people would elect a civilian constituent assembly within three months. 5/ Two days later Major Salah Salim, a member of the Council, announced that the assembly would be elected in June and would meet on 23 July for the purpose of drafting a constitution. 6/ On 25 March the Council issued a statement containing the following points: 7/

1. The Council will transfer sovereignty to a constituent assembly on 24 July 1954, with a statement that the Revolution had ended.

2. Political parties dissolved by the military regime can re-form immediately.
3. The Council will not form a new political party.
4. All citizens will enjoy full political rights.
5. Elections for assembly members will be free and direct.
6. The immediate task of the assembly will be the election of a President.

This program of action seemed to be a vindication of every hope cherished by the Egyptian people. But alas! It never came to pass. The month of June came and went, but there was no meeting of an assembly. There was merely still another promise by 'Abd al-Nasr on 19 May, repeated on 26 July, that a parliamentary regime would be established in January 1956. 8/

Why this sudden change of plans? Why the postponement of the election and meeting of a national parliament representing the Egyptian people? The answer is simple. When the 25 March statement was issued, General Naguib, who believed in the right of the people to govern themselves, was still in control of the Revolutionary Council. But when he was forced from the premiership on 18 April 1954, as the result of machinations by 'Abd al-Nasr and his cohorts, the situation changed. 'Abd al-Nasr forced the Council to adopt a decision to postpone this transfer of power. When Naguib was removed from office entirely in November 1954, the last hope of the Egyptian people for a democratic government vanished. It is not surprising that only several months later, on 21 March 1955, 'Abd al-Nasr told an Indian press delegation that "we prefer to remain in office a few more years," 9/ and on 18 May 1955, declared that "we see no advantage for Egypt in the establishment of a parliament." 10/

The attempted assassination of 'Abd al-Nasr in Alexandria on 26 October 1954, gave the Nasr clique the opportunity to consolidate its position and tighten its hold on Egypt. 'Abd al-Nasr and his associates seized on the incident as an excuse for a bloody liquidation of the Moslem Brotherhood, the last effective organized opposition to their dictatorship. They also attempted to justify the virtual arrest of General Naguib by pretending that he was implicated with the Brotherhood in a plot to seize control of the government.

This desire for dictatorial rule is not surprising when it is remembered that 'Abd al-Nasr, as well as several other members of the ruling clique, such as Fathi Radwan, were once members of the Fascistic Greenshirt organization (Misr Fatat) headed by Ahmad Husayn, which greatly admired the tactics and techniques of Hitler

and Mussolini. 11/ Radwan, in fact, seems to be an admirer of dictatorship whatever its form, for he was an enthusiastic delegate to the Communist so-called Peace Congress held in Vienna in 1951. Radio Cairo, which he controls as 'Abd al-Nasr's Minister of Propaganda (euphemistically termed Minister of National Guidance), declared on 11 October 1955, that "The USSR is a true democracy." 12/

Like all dictators, however, 'Abd al-Nasr wished to cloak his arbitrary rule under a mask of legality, so on 22 July 1955, during a speech to a rally in Cairo, he promised the Egyptian people that "in January 1956 Egypt shall witness a Parliament which will include the elite of its sons." 13/ Who this "elite" was was not specified but the matter was theoretical for, like the other promises of 'Abd al-Nasr, this one was not fulfilled. No parliament was established in January 1956 or later in 1956. January 1956 did witness the proclamation of a new constitution for Egypt. But were the Egyptian people allowed a voice in the drafting of this document so as to assure that its provisions would provide for a truly democratic regime? The Constitution was drafted arbitrarily by 'Abd al-Nasr and his cohorts, and its provisions reflect the desires and aspirations not of the Egyptian people but of the clique which rules Egypt.

To be sure 'Abd al-Nasr permitted the people to go the polls on 23 June, but they were allowed to vote only "yes" or "no." The results were inevitable, for there are few Egyptians who dare to test the wrath of Interior Minister Zakariya Muhyi ad-Din's secret police. Besides, rejection of the Constitution would have been meaningless, for the military regime would still have remained in power. Hence an impressive affirmative vote of 99 per cent was registered. 14/

On the same day the Egyptian people were allowed to elect a president. But there was but a single name on the ballot--'Abd al-Nasr--and the regime had not made a single arrangement for the possibility that the Egyptian people might have another choice.

It has rightly been said that power corrupts, and this is true of all dictators. Once they seize power they set about methodically to eliminate all rivals and to build about themselves an aura of indispensability until they achieve the rank of demi-god. Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin travelled that path, and 'Abd al-Nasr has seen no reason to change the pattern. The Egyptian people have not forgotten that General Naguib, whom they love, was the original leader of the Revolution. But 'Abd al-Nasr keeps him under house-arrest, and has systematically tried to discredit him in the eyes of the Egyptian people. Other members of the original Revolutionary Council also have learned the dangers of association with a power-hungry dictator. Colonel Rashad Muhanna and the Muhyi ad-Dun brothers have been ousted from the Council on charges of alleged

Communist and subversive activities--meaning that they objected to 'Abd al-Nasr's dictatorial rule. At the beginning of the Revolution the Council asked for the support of the Moslem Brotherhood, as 'Abd al-Nasr himself admitted in a Cairo speech on 21 August 1954. But as soon as power was secured and the Brotherhood began objecting to 'Abd al-Nasr's policies and actions, the clique denounced the Brotherhood and ruthlessly suppressed it, thus eliminating the only organized opposition to its rule.

Like all military dictatorships, the 'Abd al-Nasr regime is based on the army aided by a secret police. Though 'Abd al-Nasr is fond of saying that his government reflects the desires of every Egyptian for democratic rule, he has on occasion betrayed the real situation. In an interview with a foreign journalist in October 1955, he stated that "Throughout my life I have had faith in militarism." Then admitting that the army was his regime's only organized support, he continued: "Our revolution was stimulated in the army by a lack of equipment. If our officers feel that we still have no equipment they will lose faith in the government." 15/ But was not the Revolution supposed to have arisen out of the wishes of the people and for the purpose of giving them true democracy?

Let us consider this so-called democracy which 'Abd al-Nasr has brought to Egypt by means of the new Constitution. Speaking in Cairo on 19 May 1955, he described it as: 16/

...a strong democracy seeking to fulfill the interests of the majority, the liberation of the individual, true justice, individual and collective freedom, and a sound social justice. ...Freedom can exist only if everyone feels that he has equal opportunity, that he can say what he pleases, and that neither his means of livelihood, his sons, nor his future will be in jeopardy.

And on 16 January 1956, in connection with the new Constitution, the Revolutionary Council issued a statement in which it was stated: 17/

We cannot say that there is a freedom, that there is a parliament and that there is a constitution if the individual does not feel this freedom, and if the individual is threatened with a lack of food, and in his daily life if the individual is threatened in his present and in his future.

These are fine true words but meaningless. The Constitution guarantees the inviolability of the home, freedom of opinion and research, freedom of press and publication, and freedom of association; but all these are within the limits of the law. And who is to enact the laws governing the exercise of these rights? An assembly composed of members nominated by a single party which will

be under the absolute control of 'Abd al-Nasr. Thus, in reality, the extent of the rights is only such as 'Abd al-Nasr approves.

The Constitution also provides that Egyptians are not to be arrested, imprisoned or punished except by law; not to be banished from Egyptian soil or to be compelled to reside in or abandon a specific area except by law; and not to be liable to the confiscation of their property except by law. And who is to enact the laws governing the exercise of these rights? An assembly composed of members nominated by a single party which will be under the absolute control of 'Abd al-Nasr. Thus, in reality, the extent of the rights is only such as 'Abd al-Nasr might approve.

The Constitution says that there shall be freedom of the press. But does any Egyptian truly believe that any publication could, with impunity, print any criticism of 'Abd al-Nasr or of his regime? There is supposed to be freedom of the press. But no Egyptian journalist can practice his profession before first obtaining a license from the government. And is it not true that in 1955 the government barred 234 of Egypt's 529 journalists from their profession by refusing to renew their licenses? 18/

The Constitution says that there shall be freedom of opinion. But does any Egyptian truly believe that he can, with impunity, voice criticism of 'Abd al-Nasr or of his regime? Indeed, he is not even free to listen to the opinions of others if those opinions are critical of 'Abd al-Nasr or of his regime. For did not Zakariya Muhyi ad-Din, Minister of the Interior and head of the secret police, announce in April 1955 that any Egyptian caught listening to the Voice of Free Egypt would be considered as conspiring to overthrow the government and would be treated accordingly? 19/ 'Abd al-Nasr has absorbed well the lessons of his fellow dictators, for did not Hitler proscribe listening to the BBC and does not the Soviet Union and its satellite states still proscribe listening to the Voice of America and to Radio Free Europe?

The Constitution says that workers shall have the right to unionize. But does any Egyptian worker truly believe that he can organize a trade union that will not be subservient to the government or that he and his fellow workers can strike to obtain their justified demands? Control of labor unions is an immediate and primary target of every dictatorship, and that of 'Abd al-Nasr is no exception. As early as January 1953, the independent labor union had vanished from the Egyptian scene. Major Ibrahim al-Tahawi, then secretary general of the Liberation Front, (predecessor of the present single party National Union), boasted on 25 January 1953, that Egyptian trade unions had joined the Front and had, therefore, ceased to exist as separate entities. 20/ Does any Egyptian worker truly believe

that 'Abd al-Nasr will now permit unions to be re-created and thus to become a possible source of organized resistance to his regime?

The Constitution guarantees freedom from arbitrary arrest, imprisonment or banishment. But is there any Egyptian who does not know of Zakariya Muhyi ad-Din's secret police and concentration camps? The 'Abd al-Nasr regime, moreover, has not even been content with the limiting qualification "except by law" and the resultant power deriving from its absolute control of the assembly and its members who will enact that law. The final act of the Revolutionary Council on 25 June 1956, was to issue a decree giving the Minister of the Interior the authority during a 10-year period to place under administrative detention or arrest any person whom he decides to accuse of counter-revolutionary activities or graft. 21/

The Constitution guarantees freedom of association and assembly, which, in a real democracy, would imply the right to form political parties. But this is not the case in Egypt, for elsewhere the Constitution drafted by 'Abd al-Nasr and his cohorts provides for the formation of a so-called National Union which will make the nominations for membership in the National Assembly and which will be the country's sole legal political organization.

President 'Abd al-Nasr has taken the further precaution of adding to the Constitution a provision which states that the President of the Republic shall proclaim by decree the manner in which this National Union shall be constituted. Thus he will be able to control the Union completely. In his Alexandria speech of 26 July, he described the Union as "a national front comprising all sons of this homeland except the reactionaries, the opportunists, and the stooges of imperialism." 22/ And who is to decide who are the reactionaries, the opportunists, and the stooges of imperialism? 'Abd al-Nasr. And whom will he place in these categories? Any who dare to raise their voices in protest against his regime and against his betrayal of the objectives of the Revolution. Dictatorship can brook no opposition, and 'Abd al-Nasr has been careful to draft a Constitution which permits him to suppress it under a cloak of legality.

'Abd al-Nasr and his cohorts have declared that "opportunities must be given for new leaders to step forth" 23/ and that the National Union assures this since every qualified Egyptian may submit his name for nomination to the National Assembly. However, according to a broadcast of Radio Cairo on 12 June 1956, after the names of all hopeful candidates have been received, the executive committee shall prepare a list of those prospective candidates" to whom it has no objection." 24/ In this way, since 'Abd al-Nasr controls this executive committee, he retains the power to exclude from the ballot any person whom he feels is not personally loyal to

himself. In addition, 'Abd al-Nasr has asserted that "we shall watch over these persons after they succeed in the elections. Some of them might turn into opportunists or exploiters...Anyone turning into an opportunist should fall." 25/ In other words, even though he has been elected by the people, any member of the National Assembly who dares to criticize 'Abd al-Nasr or his regime will be expelled from his seat.

The 'Abd al-Nasr clique may speak continuously about the democracy it has brought to Egypt, but to apply the word democracy to the present Egyptian regime is a flagrant misuse of the word--remember that the Communist tyrannies of the Soviet satellite states also call themselves democracies. Nothing can conceal the fact that the 'Abd al-Nasr regime is a dictatorship based not on the will of the people but on the strength of the army and secret police. The high-sounding words used by 'Abd al-Nasr and his associates are but a smokescreen, designed to conceal and deceive. In pondering them every Egyptian should hearken to the words of Allah, revealed in the sura al-Baqara:

There is the type of man whose speech about this world's life may dazzle thee, and he calls Allah to witness about what is in his heart; yet he is the most contentious of enemies. 26/

II. FOREIGN POLICY

NASR'S VIEW OF ARAB UNITY

Egypt, so the new Egyptian Constitution declares, is an integral part of the Arab nation which Nasr has described as stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. 1/ It is, moreover, Egypt's announced aim to do everything possible to make this single nation more than a dream, to bring it to a state of reality. It is an ambition which is shared by every Arab, whether from Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or any other Arab state. Yet these Arabs would hardly approve of Egypt's plans for accomplishing this objective, for Nasr envisages not a uniting of equals but an Egyptian hegemony with himself as the only authoritative leader and spokesman for the entire Arab World.

Nasr's own words betray his grandiose ideas of expansion and Egyptian aggrandizement. In his book, The Philosophy of the Revolution, he writes: 2/

We cannot look at the map of the world ... without realizing Egypt's position on the map and her role by the logic of that position. Can we fail to see that there is an Arab zone surrounding us? ... Can we possibly ignore the fact that there is an African continent which we have been made part of by fate? ... Can we ignore the fact that there is an Islamic world with which we are united by bonds of religious principle reinforced by historical realities? ... It always strikes me that in this area in which we live is a role running around aimlessly looking for a hero to give it being ... The role is there. Its characteristics have been described. This is the stage. By the laws of geographical circumstance, we alone are able to play it.

Self-Assumed Leadership of Arab World

Thus has Nasr arrogated unto Egypt and unto himself as ruler of that country the role of leader of the Arab if not of the entire Islamic world. This same self-assumed mantle of leadership also has been mentioned on other occasions by members of the Cairo junta. For example, Nasr told the graduates of the Egyptian Aviation College on 15 September 1956, that "he who attacks Egypt will have attacked the entire Arab world." 3/ But who has given him the right to commit the armed forces and destiny of the other nations on Egypt's behalf, especially when any conflict will have been caused by Egypt's reckless violation of international law, taken without the slightest consultation with the other Arab states? On 22 July 1955, War Minister General 'Abd al-Hakim Amir asserted that "in order that Egypt may occupy her traditional place as the center of gravity in the African and Asian group of states and in order that we may be fully prepared

to fulfill our obligations towards our Arab brothers, it has become incumbent upon us to build up our armed forces." 4/ And in a press interview on 7 July 1955, Salah Salim, then Nasr's Minister of National Guidance, declared that Egypt's army "has taken it upon itself to defend every foot of the Arab World." 5/ Did he thus imply that the other Arab countries had no voice in their own defense or were incapable of defending themselves?

Aside from the arrogance of such statements, the ironic fact is that Egypt has displayed on all occasions her complete disdain for the security and integrity of the other Arab lands. When the Israeli army carried out bloody raids into Syrian and Jordanian territory, the Egyptian army, despite these high-sounding promises, did nothing. When Saudi Arabia complained to the Arab League that British forces had occupied the Buraimi oases, the Egyptian army, despite these high-sounding promises, did nothing. When the Sultan of Oman appealed for help to prevent the occupation of Oman by forces of the Sultan of Muscat, the Egyptian army, despite these high-sounding promises, did nothing. In fact, the only military danger threatening the Arab world other than that posed by Israel comes from the Soviet Union, and it was Egypt who, without bothering to consult the other Arab states, opened the gates of the Middle East to Soviet penetration. And if the threat of armed conflict hangs over the area today as a result of the Suez Canal crisis, it was Egypt who, without bothering to consult the other Arab states, took the action which precipitated the crisis.

The Nasr regime has pledged to support the Arab League. For example, in a statement made on 1 January 1955, Nasr declared: 6/

The Arabs are fully determined to back it so as to realize their aspirations of the establishment of a federation among them, which is no doubt the first and last aim of every Arab state.

In an earlier statement made on 5 September 1954, Nasr stated: 7/

Our first objective is to consolidate the Arab League in order to insure stability and security in one of the most sensitive spots in the world.

Like all of Nasr's statements, these sound very good, but unfortunately there is no substance or sincerity behind them. For Nasr regards the Arab League not as an organization of equals designed to foster Arab unity and the interests of all Arabs but rather as an instrument of Egyptian foreign policy, to be supported as long as it serves Egypt's national interests but to be discarded if and when it ceases to do so. This fact was made abundantly clear in early 1955 when Nasr threatened that Egypt would withdraw from the League if Iraq insisted, despite Egypt's objections, on forming an alliance with Turkey. 8/

The North African situation presents another example of how willing Nasr is to sacrifice the principle of Arab solidarity for purely Egyptian interests. Not unnaturally every Arab sympathizes with the national aspirations of the Algerian people, and the Arab League Council has adopted resolutions in support of those aspirations. Cairo has long been a center for North African nationalist activity and Radio Cairo the principal channel for nationalist propaganda. In November 1955, however, Nasr agreed with France to end these anti-French broadcasts in return for a French promise to resume arms shipments to Egypt. 9/ If Nasr were truly concerned with the fate of the Algerian people, no concessions could have persuaded him to abandon, even if only temporarily, his support of the North African nationalists.

Interference in Internal Affairs of Other Arab Countries

The question of interference in the internal affairs of other Arab state provides a further example of the contempt in which Nasr holds his promises and his fellow Arabs. Article 8 of the Arab League Charter clearly forbids such interference, and such action was also condemned by the resolutions of the Bandung Conference, which have been enthusiastically endorsed by Nasr and his cohorts. 10/ The latter also have reiterated this principle in their public statements. For example: In a statement to the Cairo publication al-Akhbar al-Yawm on 29 May 1956, Nasr stated that "Egypt will not allow itself to interfere in the internal affairs of any Arab state." 11/ During the course of his Alexandria speech on 26 July 1956, Nasr asserted that "our policy is based on non-intervention. We have no business in any domestic matter, and we would never interfere." 12/ And Minister of State Anwar al-Sadat, writing in the Nasr mouthpiece Al-Jumhuriyah on 27 April 1955, voiced the opinion that: 13/

Interference into the internal affairs of a nation is even more hateful now than it was during the days of imperialism in our country, because those who practice it through pressure, intimidation, use of violence, or the instigation of citizens to kill their leaders, are those who profess to love and support the Arabs and who claim to wish to protect them.

Although he did not intend them as such, al-Sadat's words are a perfect indictment of Egypt's activities, for there is scarcely a single Arab state which has not felt the results of Egyptian interference. The activities of Salah Salim in the Sudan became so blatant that the Sudanese government was forced to ask him to leave. Libya has found it necessary formally to order Nasr to close down his propaganda centers in that country. Strikes in the Saudi Arabian oilfields and unrest in the Shaykhdom of Bahrayn have been traced to funds expended by Egyptian agents and agitators. During the early part of 1955, when Egypt was trying to prevent Iraq from signing an alliance with Turkey, Iraqi

police apprehended Egyptian-paid agents who were trying to persuade loyal Iraqis to sign statements denouncing their Premier, Nuri as-Said, as a tool of imperialists -- Nuri as-Said who was fighting for Arab independence before Nasr was born. And a so-called Radio Free Iraq transmitted from Egyptian soil inflammatory broadcasts designed to incite internal rebellion in Iraq. 14/ In Syria, because Premier Fairs al-Khuri refused to side with Egypt in condemning Iraq, Nasr promoted a campaign of rioting and violence which led to al-Khuri's resignation on 7 February.

Egyptian interference in the internal affairs of Jordan has been even more flagrant. The riots and violence which wracked Jordan in December 1955 were led and organized by agents in the pay of Nasr. In his Alexandria speech on 26 July 1956, Nasr admitted that "we cannot say that the December battle of Jordan was not our battle." 15/ In an article published in al-Jumhuriyah on 27 December, Anwar al-Sadat, one of 'Abd al-Nasr's minions, boasted that his chief was responsible for keeping Jordan out of the Baghdad Pact. 16/

There is the type of man whose speech about this world's life may dazzle thee, and he calls Allah to witness about what is in his heart; yet he is the most contentious of enemies. When he turns his back, his aim is everywhere to spread mischief through the earth . . . 17/

Lack of Consultation with Other Arab Leaders

Equally strange is his concept of consultation and coordination of Arab foreign policies. It will be remembered that Egypt bitterly criticized Iraq for having decided on such an important foreign policy step as the Iraqi-Turkish alliance without consulting with the other Arab states who were sure to be affected thereby. This interdependence of Arab states is, in fact, a favorite theme of Nasr and his cohorts. In his book, The Philosophy of the Revolution, Nasr writes that: "What happens in Cairo has its counterpart in Damascus the next day, and Beirut, Amman, Baghdad, and elsewhere.... It is a single region." 18/ And in a recent speech he declared: "My fate in Egypt is linked with that of my brother in Jordan, in Lebanon, Syria, and in every country, and also in Sudan. Our fates are linked.... The fate of one of us affects that of the other." 19/ His erstwhile Minister, Salah Salim, has said: 20/

Our foreign policy was drawn up from the beginning on the basis of complete cooperation for the glory of the Arab nation and the unity of the Arabs because this is the only way to put an end to the trials, disasters and sufferings of the past as a result of the disintegration of the unity of the Arab peoples and of conflicting orientations.... What would be the meaning of all these meetings, what would be the meaning of a pact of all Arab states, and what would be the meaning of a league of our governments if any one of us separately takes the most serious and

important discussions he wishes to, without mutual understanding or consultation with the others.

Egypt has even made formal commitments in this regard. Speaking in Damascus on 28 February 1955 in connection with the newly proposed Syrian-Egyptian alliance, Salim pledged that Egypt would make its foreign policy agree with that of the other Arab states. 21/ On 6 March, he joined with Sabri al-Asali and Khalid al-Azm in issuing a communique which declared that neither member of the new alliance would conclude any international military or political agreement without the consent of the other 22/ In September 1955, Nasr and Lebanese Foreign Minister Hamid Franjiyah issued a joint statement in Cairo whereby the two countries agreed "to consult and exchange views and information continuously and without any delay on everything connected with international politics, defense, public security, and common interests of Egypt and Lebanon." 23/

What does the record show? The record shows that since the very inception of the Nasr regime it has proceeded to do what it promised not to do and what it condemns in other countries. It has consistently and continually taken the most vital foreign policy decisions without ever bothering to inform the other Arab countries, must less consult with them, even though those decisions had repercussions which affected profoundly every state. Let us consider a few examples of Egypt's actions in this regard:

In the fall of 1953, Nasr rejected all possibility of a defense alliance of the Middle East with the Western Powers and declared that the Arabs would follow a course of neutralism and would seek defense from within the area. In committing the Arab world to such a policy, he arrogantly ignored the fact that the other Arab states might have other views and might wish a voice in deciding the future course of the area. Not unnaturally this arrogance was not everywhere appreciated. In this regard it is appropriate to cite, for example, an editorial which appeared in the Beirut newspaper L'Orient: 24/

It is for Egypt, and for Egypt alone, that Lebanon and Syria, and even to a lesser extent Jordan and Iraq, are turning their backs on Britain. It is for Egypt, and for Egypt alone, that Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, who have common frontiers with the Jewish State, have refrained from seeking from the Western Powers firm guarantees against the dangerous pressure of Israeli irredentism. Now, without taking into account the special interests of Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, and without even taking the trouble to inform the Arab League, the Cairo Government is turning towards neutralism and claims to be committing the rest of the Arab states.

During the lengthy negotiations that resulted in the 1954 Anglo-Egyptian agreement on the evacuation of the Suez Canal Zone, Nasr did

not consult with any of the other Arab leaders, even though the withdrawal of British troops from the Zone was certain to affect the power balance of the Middle East. Nevertheless, Nasr did not hesitate to demand the support of every other Arab state for himself and his regime against Britain.

'Abd al-Nasr proclaims his allegiance to the ideal of Arab unity and to the necessity of working for the success of the Arab League, but his actions belie his words. He has made it clear that to him the Arab League is only an instrument for Egyptian national aggrandizement. In February 1955, he warned the League that Egypt would withdraw if it did not join with Egypt in condemning Iraq's alliance with Turkey. 25/ In other words, he was quite prepared to wreck the League if it did not bow to Egypt's wishes. This is indeed a strange way to foster Arab unity!

In criticizing the Iraqi-Turkish pact, 'Abd al-Nasr as well as his Foreign Minister have insisted that the Arab League Charter requires consultations among all the Arab states on such important matters. This interdependence of the Arab nations has been a favorite theme of the present Egyptian rulers. For example, in his book, The Philosophy of the Revolution, 'Abd al-Nasr writes: "What happens in Cairo has its counterpart in Damascus the next day, and Beirut, Amman, Baghdad, and elsewhere... It is a single region." 26/ And Major Salah Salim, while Minister of National Guidance, declared on 16 January 1955: 27/

What would be the meaning of all these (League) meetings, what would be the meaning of a pact of all the Arab states, and what would be the meaning of a league of our Governments if any one of us separately takes the most serious and important decisions he wishes to, without mutual understanding or consultation with the others?

The Egyptian leaders also have made formal commitments on this subject to the other Arab states. Speaking in Damascus on 28 February 1955, in connection with the Syrian-Egyptian alliance then being negotiated, Salim promised that Egypt would make its foreign policy agree with that of the other Arab states. 28/ A week later he joined with Sabri al-Asali and Khalid al-Azm in issuing a communique which pledged that no member state of the new alliance would conclude any international political or military agreement without the consent of the other member states. 29/ On 1 September 1955, 'Abd al-Nasr and Lebanese Foreign Minister Hamid Franjiyah issued a statement in Cairo whereby the two countries agreed to "consult and exchange views and information continuously and without any delay on everything connected with international politics, defense, public security, and common interests of Egypt and Lebanon." 30/

But as is the case with all of his promises, 'Abd al-Nasr has broken these constantly. In spite of his commitments, 'Abd al-Nasr has taken and continues to take the most vital foreign policy decisions without bothering to consult with or even to inform the other Arab states and without considering the effects of such decisions on those states. The arms deal with Soviet Russia, which certainly fell within this category since it opened up the entire Middle East to Soviet penetration and influence, was presented to the Arab nations as a fait accompli. So too was the Canal nationalization decision taken without consulting the other Arab states, even though the consequences of that action threaten the peace and stability of the entire Middle East and, because of the possible stoppage of oil and pipeline royalties, jeopardize the economic welfare of every Arab nation.

The other Arab states have faithfully fulfilled their obligations in this respect, but in return they receive from Egypt only contempt. Even as early as December 1953, the Beirut newspaper L'Orient, which is generally friendly to the 'Abd al-Nasr regime, observed that: 31/

It is for Egypt, and for Egypt alone, that Lebanon and Syria, and even to a lesser extent Jordan and Syria, are turning their backs on Britain. It is for Egypt, and for Egypt alone, that Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, who have common frontiers with the Jewish State, have refrained from seeking from the Western Powers firm guarantees against the dangerous pressure of Israeli irredentism. Now, without taking into account the special interests of Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, and without even taking the trouble to inform the Arab League, the Cairo Government is turning towards neutralism and claims to be committing the rest of the Arab states.

In September 1955, Nasr concluded an agreement with the Soviet Union (which he claimed for months was with Czechoslovakia) for the purchase of arms. This was perhaps the most important and vital decision ever taken by any modern Arab state in their history, for it opened a breach through which Soviet technicians and therefore Soviet influence could penetrate this strategic area, an area previously denied to such influence by the united front which the Arabs had followed in their opposition to the atheistic doctrine of Communism. Yet Nasr did not bother to consult or even to inform the other Arab states about this step.

In May 1956, Egypt agreed to a new United Nations-sponsored cease-fire agreement with Israel without an Israeli guarantee not to divert waters of the River Jordan, thereby leaving Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon in an embarrassing position.

In July 1956, Egypt took a step that had consequences for the entire Arab world second in importance, if not equal, to those of the Soviet arms purchase. This was the nationalization of the Suez Company. The action took the leaders of every other Arab state completely by surprise.

Nasr, thinking only of his own personal prestige and self-glorification, took this momentous decision without bothering to discuss it with them, although it brought the possibility of warfare to the Middle East and, at the very least, threatened a stoppage or reduction of oil exports with an attendant reduction of oil and pipeline royalties, unemployment of Arab workers, and a halt to major development projects dependent on such royalties. At the same time, Nasr demanded that all Arab states support him in the international crisis that ensued from the nationalization. He further showed his contempt for the economic interests of other Arab states by arranging for the Egyptian-dominated executive committee of the Federation of Arab Trade Unions, meeting in Cairo, to adopt a resolution pledging that its members would blow up and destroy all oil installations in the Middle East in the event that the Canal crisis led to armed conflict. 32/

All the above-cited examples show only too well that Nasr's only concern with the Arab nation, despite his frequent and dazzling statements to the contrary, is to use the Arab states to assure Egyptian hegemony and his own grandeur. In dealing with him, the leaders of the other Arab countries would be well advised to use caution lest they suddenly find themselves mere puppets manipulated by strings from Cairo. The statesmen of Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, which have all entered into military alliance arrangements with Egypt during the past year, especially have reason for care. Those three states are all militarily weak with small populations, while in comparison Egypt is a populous country that is relatively strong militarily. And as Nasr himself said on 7 July 1955, at a rally at al-Fayum, "Any alliance with a big state means domination in various forms.... The alliance of a small state with a big state resembles the alliance of a lamb and a wolf." 33/ The statesmen of the Arab world would do well to ponder these words, for the wolf of the Nile has shown himself to be ambitious and hungry.

CASE HISTORIES ON UNPREDICTABILITY OF NASR

1. Suez Canal Seizure

The crisis which has arisen in the world in the wake of the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal Company does not, contrary to what 'Abd al-Nasir has asserted, involve a question of imperialism but a question of whether or not unrestricted freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal is to remain in force and whether or not international treaties may be violated with impunity.

The Constantinople Convention of 1888 provides in Article I that the Canal should always remain free and open whether in peace or war for every merchant and naval ship without nationality distinction. This is a clear and unambiguous commitment to which Egypt adhered by signing the Convention. The continued binding force of this pledge has not been denied by Egypt. 'Abd al-Nasir acknowledged it in his 26 July speech in Alexandria when he announced the Canal's nationalization ^{1/} and again at a press conference in Cairo on 12 August. ^{2/} In his letter to Australian Prime Minister Menzies, who headed the 5-nation delegation which went to Cairo to submit Western proposals to the Egyptian government, he declared that Egypt's policy was to continue "freedom of passage in the Suez Canal and to guarantee its use indiscriminately." ^{3/} In another statement, read by his colleague Ali Sabri at a press conference on 31 July, 'Abd al-Nasir asserted: "As always Egypt is determined to safeguard its international obligations. In this connection it will fully observe the agreement concluded in 1888 and the assurances pertaining to it in the agreement of 1954 between Egypt and England." ^{4/}

In view of these assurances, the naive observer might wonder why the Western Powers are worried about possible future interference with free navigation through the Canal. The answer is simply that they do not feel that the record of the present Egyptian government is such that they can rely on its promise that no interference will occur. For the record shows only too well that promises by 'Abd al-Nasir and his colleagues are not to be trusted.

The Egyptian government has, in fact, already shown its contempt for its obligations under the 1888 Convention. Although the Convention states quite clearly that freedom of passage is the right of all nations without exception, Egypt has barred Israeli shipping since 1948 as well as ships bound for Israeli ports or sailing from

them. Since a state of war technically still exists between Israel and Egypt, the barring of Israeli ships could perhaps be justified on the grounds of national defense. But the ban of ships of a friendly foreign power simply because of their destination or port of departure is a clear violation of the Convention, a flagrant unilateral interpretation of the Convention without any legal basis in international law.

Consequently, it should not be considered strange that the Western Powers now decline to accept as sufficient Egyptian assurances of future freedom of passage through the Canal for ships of all nations. If today 'Abd al-Nasir feels free to bar ships on the basis of such a unilateral interpretation, what guarantee is there that tomorrow he will not undertake to bar shipping on other grounds? In fact, despite the previous promises that freedom of passage would be respected unreservedly, Ali Sabri, one of 'Abd al-Nasir's closest associates and his personal observer at the first (22-nation) Suez Conference in London, threatened the Western Powers at that time that any action on their part which did not meet with the approval of Egypt would result in Egypt's barring the Canal to their ships. While the Cairo government later disavowed this threat because of the unfavorable reaction throughout the world, it was a clear indication of the thinking of the Egyptian rulers on the subject and of the small regard in which they hold their pledged word.

The West has had too recent and too agonizing experiences with the false promises of dictators to fall into the same trap again. Every European has vivid recollections of how Hitler blithely made one promise after another, only to break them as soon as he deemed it convenient to do so. Why should they now trust 'Abd al-Nasir, who is traveling down the same road? His own words convict him. Speaking to a rally in Cairo's Republic Square on 19 June 1956, only a few weeks before the Canal nationalization, he remarked that "the objectives keep changing, aspirations grow, and demands always loom before peoples." 5/ Such a statement might have come straight out of Mein Kampf.

In explaining the reasons for the Canal's nationalization, 'Abd al-Nasir asserted that it was to rid Egypt finally and forever of all traces of imperialism and exploitation and to bring the Revolution to an end. But let us consider the record for a moment. In a press interview on 19 August 1954, he declared that "After the Suez settlement there is nothing standing in the way of our good relations with the West." 6/ On 22 March 1955, in a speech at Shallufa Camp, he said: "We have been completely liberated internally and externally. We have been liberated from internal exploitation and from foreign occupation. We feel that our homeland has become our own and the property of our sons." 7/

On 2 May 1956, the Egyptian government and the Canal Company reached an agreement whereby the Company would invest \$60 million of its reserves in Egyptian development projects. 8/ At that time 'Abd al-Nasir obviously felt that the Company was sufficiently honorable so that he could accept its money.

On 19 June 1956, only a month before the nationalization, he stated in a speech in Cairo's Republic Square that "Today Egypt is entirely free. Not a single foreign flag flies over Egyptian soil. For the first time in centuries we are completely free to fight for our own destiny. Today marks the beginning of a new era. . . A phase of the struggle has come to an end." 9/

It is indeed incredible how quickly and completely the nature of the Company could change! The specters raised by 'Abd al-Nasir in his speech were merely a callous appeal to the emotions of the Egyptian people, a smokescreen to hide the facts and the real reasons for his flagrant violations of Egypt's international obligations.

The truth is that the nationalization of the Canal was the impetuous and rash act of a temperamental child. When the United States and Great Britain withdrew their offer to extend economic and financial assistance toward construction of the High Dam project because 'Abd al-Nasir had undermined Egypt's future economy by his commitments to the Soviet Union, 'Abd al-Nasir considered their action a blow to his personal pride and, without thought to the consequences to Egypt or to the other Arab nations, he seized on the idea of nationalizing the Canal as a spectacular coup de theatre which would restore his shattered prestige. It has been said: 10/

Somebody gives a quick judgment about a certain subject. But if he considered the factors and the reasons that bring about this decision, he finds that his judgment was not just. Anyone before giving judgment on something or an action should first determine the reasons, the factors, and the causes that brought about this decision.

'Abd al-Nasir would have done well to follow this advice. In fact, it might be considered strange that he did not, for he himself made the statement to the opening session of the General Cooperative Conference at Cairo on 1 June 1956, only a month and a half before the Canal nationalization occurred. But obviously, 'Abd al-Nasir does not feel that the advice he gives to others applies equally to himself.

2. Arms Deal with Soviets

As another example of 'Abd al-Nasir's penchant for indulging in falsehood and deceit, consider the matter of the arms deal with Soviet Russia. The Egyptian people are deeply opposed to Communism and view the Soviet Union with distrust. Therefore, when the arms deal was negotiated, he informed the Egyptian people and the world that the agreement was with Czechoslovakia. 11/ On 30 September 1955, he declared categorically in a statement to the Arab News Agency that no bargain with Russia had been made 12/ and on 12 October he told the United Press that Russia had not taken part in any negotiations with Egypt. 13/ As late as 25 March 1956, he was still talking about arms from Czechoslovakia. 14/ His colleagues, for example, Deputy Premier Gamal Salim, War Minister General 'Abd al-Hakim Amir, and Minister of State Anwar al-Sadat, also consistently referred to Czech rather than Soviet arms. It was only in his Alexandria speech of 26 July 1956, that 'Abd al-Nasir finally admitted the truth when he told the Egyptian people that "we were able to get arms from Russia. I say from Russia and not from Czechoslovakia." 15/

'Abd al-Nasir speaks of peace, but he spreads confusion and unrest. O ye Moslems of Egypt and of the Arab nations! Remember what the Holy Quran says of such men in the sura al-Baqara: 24/

When it is said to them: "Make not mischief on the earth," they say: "Why, we only want to make peace."

III. NASR AND COMMUNISM

O ye who believe! Choose not My enemy and your enemy for friends. Do ye give them friendship when they disbelieve in the truth which hath come unto you, driving out the messenger and you because ye believe in Allah, your Lord? If you have come forth to strive in My way and seeking My good pleasure, show them not friendship. Do ye show friendship unto them in secret, when I am best Aware of what ye hide and what ye proclaim? And whosoever doeth it among you, he verily hath strayed from the right way. 1/

This injunction and warning to all true Believers, revealed by Allah in the holy sura al-Mumtahana, was to point out to Moslems the perils of association with the idolaters of Mecca. But can any true Moslem believe that this warning does not refer equally to the idolaters, the atheists, of today, that is, the Communists, who slander Allah and persecute his followers?

The Egyptian people and leaders in the other Arab states might properly have been surprised by the sudden Egyptian-Communist friendship because of the repeated anti-Communist statements made by the Egyptian leaders since they seized power in July 1952. Let us review some of these statements:

On 3 August 1954, 'Abd al-Nasir, in a public statement said: 2/

We are fighting an open battle in Egypt with Communists. We are convinced they are working under Soviet direction. And by the nature of the situation, Egyptian Communists could not approve of this present government because we are working for peace and stability, whereas what they want is disorder.

On 21 August 1954, 'Abd al-Nasir stated during a speech in Cairo: 3/

Who is presently opposing us for the love of opposition and subversion? First of all we find the Communists. We all know that Communism in Egypt has only one purpose and objective, that is, chaos, because it cannot live except on chaos. Communism does not accept or approve of raising the standard of living or improving

social conditions, because under such conditions Communism cannot thrive or spread its power. Communism always seeks to spread confusion . . . All of us know the aims of the Communists. . . The only aim is to achieve a Communist regime.

In January 1955, 'Abd al-Nasir, in an article written for Foreign Affairs, declared: 4/

The greatest internal enemies of the people are the Communists who serve foreign rulers.

On 29 March 1955, in an address to the Egyptian Officers' Club, Abd al-Nasir stated: 5/

I consider Communism a menace . . . The East Camp is trying to dominate states outside its orbit by subversive activity.

On 23 April 1955, during a speech made in Cairo, 'Abd al-Nasir said: 6/

What the Communists have achieved by Communism is that they have become tools of a general production apparatus, whereas they were formerly human beings with their own free will. They have denounced religion because Communism considers religion as a myth. They have denounced the individual because Communism holds that an individual has no integrity. They have attacked freedom because freedom is the belief of man in himself, and under a Communist regime the individual has neither integrity nor a will of his own. They have denied equality in their state system, because the Communist concept of the state is a pyramidal class structure at the top of which power is in the hands of one person while millions of people form the base.

Yet 'Abd al-Nasir after some arrests of low-level Communist agents, has now embraced the Communists in friendship! It is strange indeed how, after the above and many other similar statements, 'Abd al-Nasir should suddenly have discovered in the Soviet Communists the best friends of Egypt. Could it be that the Communist envoys have deluded him through flattery? The eulogies of him which fill to overflowing the state-controlled Egyptian press and radio bear witness to his vanity and love of flattery. Perhaps in his naivete he believes that he is smarter than the experienced Communists and that he can manipulate them to his own glory and personal aggrandizement. Much wiser men than he, however, have fallen martyrs to

freedom because they believed that they would outwit the Communists, and in so doing have dragged down their countries into slavery: for example, Mickolajczyk of Poland, Benes and Masaryk of Czechoslovakia. The unfortunate people of Egypt, who are denied a voice in their government, and the other Arab peoples, in considering their future, can only sorrowfully remember the warning which Allah gave to his followers in the sura Ali'Imran: 7/

O ye who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks. They will not fail to corrupt you, they only desire your ruin: rank hatred has already appeared from their mouths: what their hearts conceal is far worse.

APPENDIX A

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22. FBIS, A27, 27 July 1956 (Cairo, Egyptian Home Service, 26 July 1956, 1741 GMT).
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25. FBIS, A24, 27 July 1956.
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3. FBIS, A 10, 17 September 1956 (Cairo, Egyptian Home Service, 15 September 1956, 1230 GMT).
4. FBIS, A 44, 25 July 1955 (Cairo, Egyptian Home Service, 22 July 1955, 1905 GMT).
5. FBIS, A 3, 8 July 1955 (Cairo, Egyptian Home Service, 7 July 1955, 1630 GMT).
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